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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Siam

DATE DISTR. 18 MAY 1949

SUBJECT Chinese Position in Siam and Possible
Repercussions Caused by Growth of Chinese
Communists

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1. The wealthy class of Chinese in Siam have been watching the Chinese war with anxiety and may possibly cast their lot with the Chinese Communists.* It was noted on the last Chinese New Year that about five per cent of the Chinese in Bangkok flew the Chinese Nationalist flag. The names of all the wealthy Chinese in Siam are known to the Communists and it is believed that Communists infiltrating Siam from Malaya will exert pressure on this class to receive financial assistance. Since the wealthy Chinese have no escape from this pressure, they will probably, with selfish interests in view, support the Communists.
2. The history of the Chinese in Siam has been one of opportunistic climbing to financial power through exploitation of whomever best served their purpose. During World War II, the wealthy Chinese collaborated with the Japanese, whom they believed superior to the Siamese in business acumen, and consequently increased their fortunes substantially. In addition, the Japanese preferred to deal with the Chinese and hired more than 1,000 Chinese to make weapons in the Bangkok district of Bangkok.
3. The Chinese feeling of superiority has definitely been on the increase since the end of World War II, when China was accorded her "Big Power" status. After the war's end, groups of both Kuomintang and Communist Chinese attacked Siamese who were passing alone or in pairs through the various "Chinese" sections of Bangkok, i.e., Yawaraj, Sampeng, etc. As a result of their consequent feeling of inferiority to the Chinese, Siamese have yielded more and more to them. Also, due to the fact that Chinese control most of the wealth, business and markets, the Siamese feel incapable of coping with them.
4. After the war's end, the Khuang government allowed Chinese dominance to increase. Subsequently, Thamrong's government attempted to keep a "balance of power" by assisting both the Kuomintang and Communist Chinese elements with the result only that both elements became more powerful to the detriment of the Siamese.

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5. It is estimated that there are 3,000,000 Chinese in Siam.** The rich Chinese have supported the Kuomintang rather than the Communists mainly because they thought Nationalist China was the stronger and would protect them. It is believed that they will do anything to help any movement that will ensure their safety and the security of their fortunes. Hence, they will probably now side with the Communists, offer financial support, and even carry out orders to influence the Siamese to discharge government officials who were educated in England or the United States and who might deter or prevent the rise of Communists to strategic positions. In all probability, once the Chinese had served their purpose, they would be liquidated, but they are too vain to foresee the obvious.***

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~~CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY~~ Comment. It is not known whether Russian Communists are working closely with Chinese Communists in Siam, or if the Russian Legation in Bangkok is involved in any way.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY~~ Comment. Other estimates have placed the figure between three and five million.

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~~CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY~~ Comment. ~~CONFIDENTIAL/CONTROL - U.S. OFFICIALS ONLY~~ believes the Siamese are too corrupt and weak at the top levels and too disinterested and illiterate on the lower levels to stand off any determined Chinese Communist offensive aided by the rich, sometime-Kuomintang Chinese who control Siam's money.

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